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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 001684

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AMMAN FOR REFCOORD KANESHIRO  
CAIRO FOR REFCOORD CHEYNE  
GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2016

TAGS: PREF PHUM SMIG SOCI KISL IZ

SUBJECT: SNAPSHOT OF DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ

REF: A) MOSUL 48 B) BASRAH 51 C) HILLAH 56 D) BAGHDAD  
768

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, REASONS  
1.4 (B) AND (D).

**¶11. (C) Summary:** Displacement of Iraqis spiked following the mid-February bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, but has now leveled off to a slower overall rate of growth. The main reasons for displacement include: death threats, lack of access to education, discriminatory firings, forcible expulsion, and kidnappings and killings of family members. The best available figures suggest the scope of internal displacement currently ranges between 14,607 families/76,638 individuals and 14,607 families/87,642 individuals (based on estimate of six individuals per family) - still not a large share of the 28 million population. Shia are displacing from Sunni majority areas to Shia majority areas, and Sunnis are likewise displacing from areas where they are the minority to Sunni-majority areas. Christians are reportedly displacing from Muslim areas in the South to Erbil and Ninawa, but this displacement is not recorded in the available displacement numbers. Rumors of large scale flight abroad by Iraqi religious minorities are not borne out by information available to the UN in neighboring countries. End  
Summary.

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Overall Displacement Numbers  
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**¶12. (SBU)** There are two available sets of statistics on internal displacement. The first is compiled by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM), the branch of the Iraqi Government with the mandate to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs). The second is compiled by the UN-affiliated international organization International Organization for Migration (IOM) based on information received from its partners. The two sets of figures had been diverging, with IOM estimates falling significantly behind MODM numbers, but the trend has reversed and IOM numbers are now catching up to MODM's.

**¶13. (SBU)** The latest IOM numbers of families taking refuge in governorates as of May 17 are as follows:

Baghdad:	2,734 families
Samawa:	(no information)
Wasit:	1,393 families
Maysan:	850 families
Muthanna:	463 families

Dhi Qar:	440 families
Basrah:	71 families
Karbala:	610 families
Babil:	410 families
Qadisiya:	200 families
Najaf:	1,392 families
Anbar:	2,554 families
Diyala:	976 families
Salah ad Din:	351 families
Kirkuk:	(no information)
Ninawa:	319 families

overall total: 12,773 families (approx. 76,638 individuals based on estimate of six individuals per family)

¶4. (SBU) The latest MODM numbers as of May 17 are as follows:

Baghdad:	3,718 families
Samawa:	392 families
Wasit:	1,300 families
Maysan:	559 families
Muthanna:	(no information)
Dhi Qar:	772 families
Basrah:	713 families
Karbala:	1,393 families
Babil:	550 families
Qadisiya:	580 families
Najaf:	1,600 families
Anbar:	300 families
Diyala:	1,258 families
Salah ad Din:	1,317 families
Kirkuk:	173 families
Ninawa:	32 families

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overall total: 14,607 families (approx. 87,642 individuals based on estimate of six individuals per family)

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Trends in Sectarian Displacement  
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¶5. (SBU) Detailed reports from MODM show Shia are displacing from mainly Sunni areas like Baquba, Anbar Province, and Salah ad Din Province to mainly Shia areas like Karbala, Najaf and the Baghdad neighborhoods of Sadr City and Shu'ala. Sunnis are likewise displacing from mainly Shia areas like Karbala, Basra, and Thi Qar Provinces to mainly Sunni areas like Anbar Province and the Baghdad neighborhoods of Abu Ghraib, Tarmiya, and Mahmudiya. Neither set of statistics records displacement of non-Muslim religious minorities. A USAID/OFDA NGO partner working with IDPs in the field reports there have been Christian IDPs in Erbil since before the Samarra events receiving assistance from the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). REO Mosul has also recently been approached by Christian clerics reporting Christian IDPs in Bartallah (ref A). USAID/OFDA has dispatched a partner NGO to check into the situation in Bartallah.

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Upswing Since Samarra Bombing  
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¶6. (SBU) There was a sharp spike in internal displacement following the mid-February bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra and the resultant surge in sectarian violence. Displacement has never returned to the lower, pre-Samarra levels, but the data suggests that the spike has now flattened into a gradual increase in the numbers of displaced persons. IDPs displaced in the context of military operations in places like Tal Afar and the Western Euphrates Valley have tended to return to their homes when the fighting settles down. IDPs motivated by sectarian

pressures have not. New sectarian displacement has outweighed returns and kept the overall country-wide IDP totals creeping steadily upward.

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Reasons for Displacement  
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¶17. (SBU) A USAID/OFDA NGO partner that is well and favorably known to the USG and that works in the field with IDP populations reports that the main reasons IDPs displace are because:

- they receive written or phone death threats
- their children are unable to continue their studies
- they lose their jobs due to sectarian discrimination
- they are forcibly expelled without their possessions
- their children are kidnapped for ransom
- their family members are killed

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Comment  
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¶18. (C) Comment: The USAID/OFDA partner's information on reasons for displacement is credible and consistent with other reports we have been hearing (refs A, B, C, and D). It is difficult to know for sure how many people are displacing since many stay with friends and family or occupy vacant buildings rather than setting up readily visible tent cities. Our assessment is that IOM and MODM figures cited are credible and are the best available numbers. Neither the MODM numbers nor the IOM numbers include any mention of displacement by non-Muslims, which is hard to credit in the context of complaints we hear from minority groups such as Christians, Mandaeans, Yazidis, and Shabak. There are persistent rumors that religious minorities are departing Iraq in large numbers, but we have not seen any hard evidence to back up that assertion. UNHCR missions in neighboring countries have not reported a sudden upsurge in Iraqi religious minority asylum seekers since the Samarra bombing. We suspect that displaced religious minorities may either be escaping the notice of the statistics keepers or displaced minorities are concealing their religion for fear of persecution.

End comment.

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